MONTEREY NEWS

May 2007
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The Town

From Easter to Nor'easter

The nor'easter that hit Berkshire County from April 13 through 16 caused roads to wash out, rivers to jump their banks, and Lake Buel to make several unwelcome house calls. At 9:30 a.m. on Monday, April 16, with rivers raging, roads disappearing, and a flood-induced fire at a house on Hebert's Cove on Lake Buel, Police Chief Gareth Backhaus officially declared a state of emergency in Monterey. While the exact cause of the fire has yet to be determined, Fire Chief Ray Tryon speculated that it was caused by a short circuit caused by the flooding. The apartment complex on Lake Buel, Blue Heron Landing, was without water and electricity for three days. Declaring a state of emergency makes it possible for individuals and the town to seek relief funds through the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA). MEMA was scheduled to tour the flooded houses on Monday, April 23, and to review the road damage on Tuesday, the 24th.

Highway Superintendent Maynard Forbes reported that many roads in Monterey were damaged and washed out with varying degrees of severity. Sandisfield Road sustained some of the worst damage, with a large gully created where the shoulder of the road used to be. New Marlborough Road below the old Scheffey farm was closed, and the Tryons' farm on New Marlborough Road was under water. Curtiss Road was inundated with 12 inches of water, and Art School Road, Mount Hunger Road, Hupi Road, and Cronk Road all had washouts, as did Route 23 from Bidwell Road to Chestnut

Maynard Forbes

Monterey firemen had to contend with a flooded Lake Buel as they battled a fire in a flooded house on Hebert's Cove, April 16.

Hill. Wellman Road washed out and a large pine tree rammed into the bridge, but the bridge was not damaged. There was also flooding on Swann Road, Beartown Mountain Road, and Brett Road.

With all that, Forbes reported that the damage in Monterey was "not too bad" when compared with other hill towns. At a meeting of Highway Superintendents in the area, Forbes learned that the town of Blandford estimated $700,000 worth of road damage; Sandisfield reported an estimated $200,000 worth of damage with 60% of the roads washed out. By comparison Forbes estimated that Monterey had approximately $60,000–$70,000 worth of damage.

Videotaping the Town Meeting

On April 2 the Select Board met with Leo Mahoney, station manager of Community Television of Southern Berkshire, or CTSB, to discuss the feasibility of video taping the annual town meeting. Mahoney informed the board that CTSB currently serves five towns and that the camera operators are no longer volunteers but paid professionals. Mahoney said that CTSB is not in a position financially to cover the weekly Select Board meetings but they would be willing to lend us their equipment and train someone to use it. (Good Monday Morning Monterey!) Mahoney agreed to cover the annual town meeting this year, put it on the air, and provide a DVD to the town. The Select Board asked Fire Chief Ray Tryon if there would be any problem with CTSB setting up in the Fire House and Tryon said that it would be fine. The board then asked the Town Moderator, Mark Makuc, his thoughts on the taping. Makuc didn't think much of it, fearing it would stifle discussion. He said that many people are shy of public speaking anyway, and he believes that a camera would discourage those who are already reluctant to speak in front of a group. The idea to videotape the town meeting was in part generated by a disagreement over the minutes taken by the Town Clerk at the 2006 town meeting. The Select Board decided to make an audio tape of the town meeting instead.

Monterey Boaters Left High and Dry

Brian Puntin met with the Select Board on April 9 to discuss public boat access to Lake Garfield. In years past with the advent of the beach season boaters have had the option of putting in their boats at Kinne's Grove. This past winter Kinne's Grove was sold to a private party, and the boat launch is no longer available to the public, further complicating the ongoing problem of creating public access to Lake Garfield. The lake is designated by the commonwealth as a "great pond," and with that designation comes the stipulation for public access. The boating and fishing season begins as soon as the ice melts on the lake and ends in July, when the swimmers hold sway. Since the public boat ramp is on the town beach, the two activities, swimming and boating, have been deemed incompatible due to safety reasons and health concerns about gas and oil in the swimming area.

This issue has become a real conundrum for the town. The state is cranky about limited public access to a great pond. Prices for lakefront property are sky high and there is no indication of that changing. One answer may be for the town to purchase the next suitable piece of lakefront property that becomes available. According to Town Accountant Barbara Gauthier, some years ago Kay Mielke established a Conservation Fund that over a period of time grew to $14,000. Then, also years ago, during an audit the town was informed by the state that it was illegal to add to a town account each year with the monies accruing but not being spent. Although it has not been added to, that $14,000 dollars is still in the Conservation Fund. If a suitable piece of property were to come on the market the town could use this money to move quickly, possibly hold the property with

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What's in your attic?

a purchase and sale agreement, and bring it before the town for a vote at a special town meeting.

Director of Operations

Highway Superintendent Maynard Forbes meets with the Select Board each Monday morning during the Select Board meeting. On April 2, he requested permission from the Select Board to hire seasonal help for the summer. Due to the amount of road repair work needed, this person could do some mowing which would allow the Highway Department workers to continue working with the machinery on the roads. The money for the position would come out of the Highway Department budget. Forbes noted that this has been done in years past by other Highway Superintendents. The board approved the request.

Select Board member Wayne Burkhart asked if the Transfer Station accepts tires or batteries. Forbes responded that it does not. Select Board chair Michael Storch said that the town should investigate the feasibility of disposing of such items. Burkhart concurred saying, "It would be a wonderful service to the town."

On April 9 the board discussed a $400 charge incurred by the town for an elevator inspection. Forbes said that he was under the impression that fees are waived for municipalities, but the elevator company informed him that everyone is charged for inspections. He suggested that one of the selectmen call Representative Smitty Pignatelli's office to see if there are any alternatives.

The electric company will move the outdoor floodlight at the town shed. There was a complaint that the light shines directly in drivers' eyes as they are approaching from Gould Road.

Peggy Reeves

The Hunger Mountain Boys (Matt Downing, Kip Beacco, and Teddy Webber) performed for a full Monterey Meetinghouse on March 31.

Police Blotter

Anecdotal reports of the new speed-monitoring trailer that has been placed across from the Town Hall indicate that it is a very effective method for decreasing the speed of traffic through town, particularly, this reporter noted, large trucks.

The following items were addressed by the Police Department this month: abandoned 911 calls on Bidwell Road, Tyringham Road, and Main Road; assistance to Fire Department with two calls; false alarms on Sylvan Road, Wellman Road, Swann Road, and at Roadside Café; assist to Great Barrington Police with DUI arrest; lockout on New Marlborough Road; disabled motor vehicle on Tyringham Road; fire at a home on Hebert's Cove; two out-of-control brush fires (both had permits to burn), one on Harmon Road and one on Cronk Road; a call from Sylvan Road about a dog that returned home with a bone thought to be a human bone, which after a brief investigation turned out to be from a deer carcass; meeting with official from MEMA on April 23 and 24. >

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Miscellaneous

On April 23 the Select Board met with Jina Ford of Berkshire Mediation Services. Ford presented the board with her report, the result of doing a series of interviews with town employees and elected and appointed officials. Berkshire Mediation was hired to review the roles and responsibilities of the various positions at the Town Hall, learn how they interact, and make recommendations for both improvements and conflict resolution. Town Accountant Barbara Gauthier, who participated in the interviews, reminded the Select Board that she did it with the understanding that the report would be made public. The board agreed. They will review the report and present the information to the town.

Also on April 23, Select Board candidate Scott Jenssen stopped by to discuss all matters Select Board with the board. He asked if they thought that there were any pressing issues in town right now. Nothing really leapt to mind and Scott said, "I know! I've interviewed people about this and most people said, 'Nothing.'"Jenssen added that there were some concerns about the boat ramp, the Scenic Mountains Act, salt usage, the widening of West Road, and permit issues.

Jenssen asked the board about cell towers and was told that the Planning Board is currently reviewing the bylaw and discussing a possible change. Jenssen asked Maggie Leonard (present as your reporter) about the status of the proposed subdivision off West Road. Leonard, who is Planning Board chair, replied that although a preliminary plan was filed in August 2005 no information or action has come before the Planning Board since then. Jenssen asked if there was an official job description for Select Board members, and Jon Sylbert lent him his manual for review.

— Maggie Leonard

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Informational Meeting on Proposed Town Budget

On Friday evening, April 27, an informational meeting about the budget was held at the Monterey Firehouse, hosted by the Finance Committee, the Select Board, and the Employee Compensation Committee. Finance Committee member Dan Moriarty opened the meeting with a personal and heartfelt thanks to the Monterey firefighters who responded to the house fire on Hebert's Cove during the recent flooding. Moriarty said that the quick response by the firefighters surely saved his home which was adjacent to the burning house. Moriarty also praised retiring Finance Committee member Debra Mielke for her service to the town.

School Budget

This year the mission of the Select Board and the Finance Committee was to level-fund the budget. That said, the largest increase in the town budget is Monterey's portion of the Southern Berkshire Regional School District (SBRSD), which will increase by $70, 687. The appropriation for FY 2007 was $920,108.00 and the request for this year is $990, 795.00. Select Board member Jon Sylbert told the meeting that there still may be a glitch: "It's possible that the town of Sheffield may choose not to honor the current apportionment system of the school district's expenses." He went on to explain the situation. "The Department of Education has a statutory formula for apportioning the school budget and an alternate assessment method. In February 2007 the DOE issued two new guidelines for those districts, such as Southern Berkshire, that use the alternate assessment method: 1) Each town in the district must vote every year at the annual town meeting to continue using the alternate agreement, and; 2) all the towns in the school district must agree on the alternate agreement. In short, the nine-year agreement that was ratified by the five towns of the district in 2001 must now be ratified annually. If Sheffield voters decide to vote down the current agreement, then Monterey could see its contribution to the budget increased by $70,000."

Sylbert continued, "If you know anyone in Sheffield, please ask them to go to town meeting and vote for the current agreement. If the budget is not passed it will be devastating for the school district." Mary Ellen Brown, who was the business manager for the school district for many years, stood up and said, "Every year the Sheffield Select Board recommends to not fully fund the school district, and every year the people of Sheffield hear them out and approve the budget. I think this year will probably be no different." (See school budget fact sheet, p. 12.)

Other Budget Items

The total real estate and personal property levy will be up $42,154.08 over last year. Continuing with other budget items, General Government spending

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request was reduced by $11,940.00. This category includes both appointed and elected positions such as the Select Board, the Assistant Assessor, the Treasurer, the Tax Collector, and the Town Clerk, and town employees such as the Interdepartmental Secretary and the Town Accountant. General Government also includes the expenses for the Assessors, expenses for the Town Clerk, and the expenses for operating the Town Offices.

Public Works and Facilities will increase $26,669 from $680, 931 for FY 2007 to $707,600 for FY 2008, an increase of 3.92%. This category includes salaries for the Highway Department, dam inspection, soldiers' graves, Southern Berkshire Solid Waste District, overtime supplies and fuel, tree removal, the Town Garage, and the Transfer Station.

In Culture and Recreation, the Library is requesting a $6,452 increase, which you can read about in detail in another article in this issue of the *Monterey News* (see p. 9). Otherwise the Library maintenance budget, the Cultural Council and the Memorial Day budget are requesting negligible increases of $175–$300.

If the aforementioned and other special article budget requests (see below) are approved, the total operating expenses for the town will increase by $54,697, or 1.96%, to $2,851,942. It should be noted that FY2008 will mark the last payment on the loan for the Town Hall renovation ($46,050) and also the last payment for the 2003 fire truck ($40,809). And speaking of the Town Hall renovation, there is a budget request for $7,400 to purchase a new furnace for the building. When the Town Hall was renovated there were not sufficient funds for a new furnace. As readers of the *Monterey News* may recall, the furnace has broken down three times this winter.

Town Employee Compensation

Janet Cathcart, a member of the Employee Compensation Committee (ECC), joined Finance Committee member Dan Moriarty at the head of the room to discuss the findings of the ECC. The mission of the ECC was to review the wages and salaries of the town employees (cash compensation) and to compare those wages with surrounding towns of comparable size. The committee made comparisons with Otis, West Stockbridge, New Marlborough, Tyringham, Egremont, and Stockbridge. Members of the committee were Dan Moriarty from the Finance Committee, Michael Storch from the Select Board, Director of Operations Maynard Forbes, Police Chief Gareth Backhaus, and Janet Cathcart, who described herself as the only "civilian" on the committee.

Monterey citizen Richard Tryon complained that the two town employees with the largest salaries and the "biggest raises" were on the ECC. Cathcart explained that the two department heads, Director of Operations Forbes and Police Chief Backhaus, were integral to the evaluation process. "Both of the department heads did a lot of research. It was a hearing out and evaluation of the evidence. It was also a negotiation with them," said Cathcart. She explained: "The ECC was established to create a process of regular review to validate fair and competitive compensation and make recommendations."

According to the ECC, among the towns researched Monterey's employees were paid at the low end of the spectrum. The ECC handout distributed at the meeting states, "The salaries for the Director of Operations, Chief of Police, and one of the Highway positions are increased by 10% and represent a catch-up to more fairly represent a competitive compensation." Cathcart explained that the ECC only researched salaries and hourly wages for FY 2008, and that "an ongoing review has begun regarding benefits." When someone objected to the lack of research on benefits, Select Board Chair Michael Storch said, "Monterey employees receive the minimum benefits that are mandated by the state." (See ECC article on p. 10.)

The Protection of Persons and Property category of the budget, which includes the Building Inspector, the Building Inspector Clerk, the Police Chief, the

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Police Officers, the Fire Department, and the Animal Control/Dog Officer, was up $9,030. The increases were reflected in the salary for the Police Chief and Police Officers, and the Fire Department expenses. Select Board chair Michael Storch again took the floor to defend the increases. Storch said that last year the Select Board held two meetings with owners of second homes. One of the things that he heard at those meetings was appreciation for the increased police presence in Monterey and the reduction of break-ins in second homes. Storch went on to say, "Seventy-five percent of the homes in Monterey are second homes. Monterey has half a billion dollars in assessed valuation. That's *billion* dollars, not million. These are multimillion dollar homes and these people deserve protection. They pay 80% of the taxes in this town. We owe it to them to have adequate police coverage."

Special Appropriations Articles

Article 13 is to vote to appropriate $320,000 for a salt shed at the town garage. Richard Tryon took the floor: "I haven't seen anything about this. No drawings, no plans. I am not inclined to vote this amount of money for something I haven't seen." Storch took issue with this characterization of implied secrecy and said that it had been discussed for months and written about in the *Monterey News*. Tryon indicated that a presentation would be appropriate under the circumstances. Stephen Rose, who is a candidate for the Select Board, suggested, "It would be good if there could be a hand-out for town meeting. Then everyone could have an idea of what it would look like."

Article 17 is to see if the town will appropriate $5,700 for the purchase of a Mapping Program Link for the Board of Assessors. Bob Gauthier, representing the Assessors, said, "This is a fantastic program. Right now in our database we have sketches of buildings, information on properties, and maps, but it's all separate. This program will link them all together." Bob Lazzarini, also from the Board of Assessors, added, "We have our normal database, all the GIS data from the state, and our own maps. This program will link them together. Ultimately we would like to have a giant map of all the parcels, be able to click on a particular parcel and have all the information for that parcel come up."

Town Clerk Barbara Swann took the floor to discuss Article 25, which requests that the minutes taken by the Town Clerk at the Annual Town Meeting be approved by the Moderator and the Select Board. Swann recommended that the article be passed over at town meeting. She read from a statute that stated: "The Town Clerk shall record the votes and, by inference the details leading up to the vote."

Article 28 was introduced by Richard Tryon. The article seeks a town meeting vote to direct the Select Board to direct the Police Chief to have a town police officer in the center of town on weekends from 8:30–11 a.m. from Memorial Day through Labor Day, and again on Columbus Day weekend. Tryon said that the area is crowded and dangerous and that it would be nice to have a police officer holding up traffic coming into town while cars are backing out of parking at the Post Office and the General Store. Select Board chair Michael Storch responded that there is not sufficient parking in town and that the Coffee Club folks are the ones who take up most of the spaces. Storch, himself a member of the Coffee Club, said that if the members of the Coffee Club would park at the Town Hall then more parking spaces would be available.

The informational meeting was mainly about the budget items on the warrant and was not intended to address the many articles that do not involve money. Hence the hosting of the meeting by the Finance Committee. All the warrant items and issues will be discussed and voted on at the annual town meeting on Saturday, May 5. Prior to the annual town meeting at 9:30 a.m., there will be a special town meeting at 9:15. Childcare will be available at the annual town meeting.

— Maggie Leonard

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Additional Statements from Select Board Candidates

Scott Jenssen

Dear Neighbors and Citizen-Voters of Monterey,

I hope you will give me the opportunity to explain to you in this letter a little more of my background and my hopes for Monterey's future. Your role in any function of town government needs to be prominent, but you therefore need to understand where I and my opponent may differ in our views and backgrounds.

As you may know, I was born in 1959 here in Monterey. I attended our local Monterey school, where Gige O'Connell was our teacher. I graduated from Mt. Everett High School in 1977, guided in my major in Building Structures by John and Susan Sellew's father, Welles Sellew.

After I graduated from high school, my uncle bought the Monterey General Store from the Weiss family and I managed it for two years prior to becoming Food Service Manager for Berkshire School, working for the Seller Corporation out of Waltham, MA. The corporation transferred me to a more demanding job in Maine, working as Assistant Food Service Director for the Maine Maritime Academy.

At the Academy, I served as both Assistant Director and 1st Steward on the training vessel for the State of Maine. I was responsible, at the ripe old age of 25, for 27 fulltime employees and many part-time employees. Some of my duties included corporate weekly operating statements, maintaining budget control of each week's operations, through inventory and meal counts as well as meal and labor costs. The work was very demanding, as we often entertained foreign dignitaries, including Governors and Mayors, Ambassadors and Police Chiefs, in receptions on board ship at ports of call throughout Europe and the Mediterranean. If we came in under budget, we were rewarded with the ability to keep our jobs. Budgeting and inventory as well as delegating and personnel relations are all-important to business and government. I received a thorough introduction to these concepts and was successful. We had a great time doing this, but I left after five years for a less stressful life that allowed me to get back to land and have a home life.

After I left the Academy, I became a volunteer ambulance attendant, full-time chef, and part-time carpenter. Over those four years, I was elected as the Vice-President of the Bagaduce Ambulance Squad in Castine, Maine. This, and a stint as a volunteer Dixieland Jazz disc jockey, two hours a week at a local radio station, gave me greater understanding and appreciation of the needs of volunteer services of various sorts in local communities. >

Will Marsh

Select Board candidates Scott Jenssen (left) and Stephen Rose answered questions at April 25th Candidates' Forum. Unfortunately, attendance was sparse.

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I moved back to Monterey in the mid-90s, where I set up a small carpentry business, which has become successful. And now, I am ready to give back to Monterey in the same spirit as Monterey and my life experiences have prepared me for public service. I would like to bring to the Select Board a fresh viewpoint without preconceived agendas but with some concerns. I am strongly in favor of volunteer services, as I truly believe that they are at the heart of all strong communities. I am in favor of cell tower placement (as is my opponent) but I am not actively in search of a company or location for placements. I do believe that in the near future we will have to succumb to this inevitability. At that time, responsible placement will be of utmost importance. In addition, DSL Internet service for all of Monterey can be achieved and I would like to assist in this process.

I believe the procedures and zoning regulations with regard to steep slope development here in Monterey need to be carefully reviewed with an eye to prevent erosion and silting of nearby water courses. The New England character of our landscape and lakes needs to be preserved through careful planning. The Select Board, acting as liaison, can work on developing dialogue and balance among year-round and second home owners and developers as well as citizens in abutting towns to help preserve this landscape. I would work with the Planning Board and the Conservation Commission and the ZBA to ensure we maintain the natural and harmonious balance of that landscape—the heart of the reason people have moved to this town.

Other issues which need to be addressed by all of us include continual support of our Park Commission, our local school, our library, and maintaining our town in a way that looks into the future, keeps us looking ahead, and yet preserves our traditions and past. What I have learned in my life has stood me in good stead in my own business in Monterey and, I believe, will be a resource for Monterey to call upon if you help elect me.

I would appreciate your vote on Saturday, May 5th, at the Annual Town Meeting and Election held in the Monterey Firehouse.

Stephen Rose

In the April issue of the *Monterey News* I provided a detailed letter about my candidacy for Select Board. This letter is different. It is to provide you with my ideas to win your vote.

Monterey has many intelligent and creative citizens who have mobile jobs and home-based businesses and are in great need of high speed Internet and cell phone service. I want to make this a priority and make it happen for our whole town. I believe this investment is critical for economic success in Monterey. I have experience in town government, fresh ideas and innovative approaches for problem solving, and sound decision-making. I will improve communication, in town government, with the citizens of Monterey, and with neighboring towns. I want to maintain the quality of town services, schools, and infrastructure, despite increasing human demands and a tight budget. As selectman I will work towards maintaining our rural beauty by preserving and protecting farms, forests, dirt roads, public land, open space, rivers, and lakes. I will work with surrounding towns on regional issues such as river and lake management, communications, schools, and economic development. I have the time, skills, and energy to devote to this very important leadership position in our town, and I will get things done. I want to help shape the future of Monterey. I want to be your next selectman. Please vote for me on May 5th.

Education: Graduate of Monument Mountain Regional High School, 1980; BA in Political Science, Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio, 1984; Future of Democracy Conference, University of Colorado, 1984.

Occupation: News photographer; clients include the *Boston Globe,* the *New York Times,* the *Berkshire Eagle,* and Associated Press

Memberships: National Press Photographers Association; Lake Buel Restoration Preservation District.

Town Government: Monterey Planning Board.

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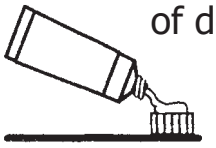

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Route 23 Monterey

Library Seeks Budget Increase to Expand Services

In the last two years there has been a large increase in usage of the Monterey Library. Circulation is up, we have expanded our programs for children, and we have started a DVD collection and taken steps to make the Internet more accessible to library patrons by getting DSL and adding wifi service, which is now available in the center of town to anyone. Now we are asking the Town Meeting for a $6,000 budget increase so that we can be open another day and join a regional system that will provide substantial additional library services. The Monterey Library is currently open 11.5 hours a week on four days; if the budget is approved it will be open for two hours on Thursdays, making it open 13.5 hours a week spread over five days. Beyond that, joining the regional system will make library services accessible from home computers 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

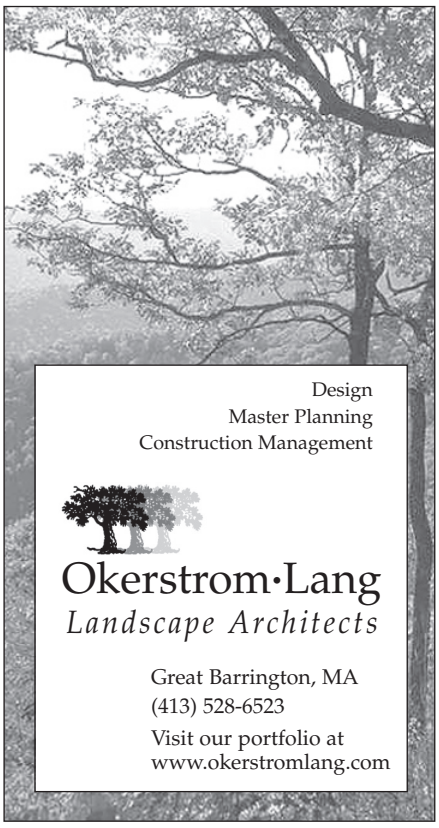
For many years the Western Massachusetts Regional Library System has been the organization that the Monterey Library has used to conduct interlibrary loans, which are important to a small library. This service has been paid for by the commonwealth. In 1982, some of the libraries in the region formed a resource sharing network call Central Western Massachusetts Automated Resource Sharing (CWMARS). Presently it has grown to 142 members, including Sheffield, Great Barrington, Lee, and the Berkshire Athenaeum in Pittsfield, and has holdings of 1.8 million titles and 9 million items. This system is based on sharing resources and software, and connects all libraries that are members. Monterey is not currently a member, although the librarian (but not patrons) is allowed to utilize some of the services.

In 1989 the Monterey Library automated using a standalone system from Follett. We have used that system since then, upgrading when necessary. Over the years the Monterey Library has used only state aid and grant monies to provide that automation as well as Internet access. The Follett automation software does not mesh with CWMARS, so the Monterey Library's current web presence is limited to the general information in its slot on the town's site. Our catalog is not currently available on the web, nor can the people of Monterey access CWMARS with a Monterey Library card. Interlibrary loans must be made through the library director.

Joining CWMARS would expand the library beyond its physical limitations (and physical expansion of the library building would be extremely costly and difficult because of its proximity to the river), and bring its services into the technological and informational age we all live in. Our catalog would be available 24/7, along with the other 9 million items available in CWMARS. Our patrons would be able to access CWMARS from home; for example, after hearing about a book, they could look it up for availability, place a hold on it if it's in Monterey, or even if it's in Chicopee, and if it is from Chicopee it will be delivered to Monterey. Patrons will be able to pick the book up from the Monterey Library, check their account from home later to see if they have anything else out, renew books from their own home, and return it to the Monterey Library.

CWMARS also will provide access to many databases, some too costly for individuals, that could be used in researching, and unlike most Google searches the results from those databases will provide dependable information that students and researchers of all ages will be able to trust. Patrons will also be able to bring their CWMARS cards from Monterey to any other member of the network and borrow books from that library, and even return them to Monterey. Monterey residents will be able to draw on and get local delivery of the resources of public libraries in Pittsfield, Springfield, Worcester, and many other towns, as well as academic libraries in the area.

The future of movies and audio books is downloading them through the Internet—and now that DSL is beginning to be available someone with a CWMARS card will be able to download an audio book onto an Ipod or other player and listen to it during a three-week borrowing period, after which it will erase unless it is renewed—and all of this from the individual's home. >



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The Monterey Library Trustees and Library Director feel these benefits from joining CWMARS are substantial. If you visit some of the other CWMARS libraries you will be impressed at how well the system functions and how high the standards of service are. There is no question that this is the future of a thriving library. Many residents of Monterey already drive miles away to get books and library services that we could offer in this town by joining CWMARS.

The question, as always, is the bottom line. The library has in hand a quote of $6,996 for FY 2008. Of that, the one-time startup costs would be $3,700. There would be additional costs in upgrading computer equipment in the library, though all the telecommunications equipment and costs would be borne by CWMARS. Our annual fee would be based on usage of the system and what our share of the total costs would be, but the projections are about $3,500 per year for the next few years. The library will be able to use state aid and other monies to pay the startup fees, and will try to get whatever grant monies are available, but we are requesting an increase in the FY 2008 library budget to $40,568, which will go toward both the CWMARS fees and staffing for the additional hours we will be open. The increase of $6,452 from last year is considerable, but the services for the dollar will be substantial and go much farther than any money spent on physical expansion.

The Library Trustees and the Library Director feel the increase is justified, and we are excited by the possibilities. The return to the townspeople will be enormous, and we hope you will support our efforts to provide the best possible, affordable library service to the residents of Monterey.

— Monterey Library Trustees
and Library Director

Town Employee Compensation Budget

As the annual town meeting approaches, I want to respond to questions rumbling around town about the compensation proposals for Monterey's seven full-time employees and offer suggestions for how these budget items might best be considered in that forum. I am a member of the Employment Compensation Committee (ECC) appointed by the Select Board last December to conduct a thorough review of the compensation packages for these employees and make recommendations for the 2008 budget. Those who attended the information meeting on April 27 were presented with detailed material developed by the ECC, but this letter will give a brief overview for those who missed that meeting.

Recent town meetings have elicited heated arguments over individual compensation that have been confusing, misinformed, and wounding and disappointing to Monterey's employees. Also, the specific job descriptions were combined or separated in different line items from year to year, causing "apples and oranges" comparisons that led to more confusion.

A routine job and compensation review process has not been established in Monterey. Several "compensation committees" have come and gone without causing measurable changes. Monterey's full-time employees have not received raises except for some receiving cost of living allowances in recent years.

Because the ECC was appointed by the Select Board with representation from the Select Board, the Finance Committee, and the two major department heads (Highway & Police), this committee was an appropriate place for careful evaluation and direct negotiation. Everyone was asked to "put it in writing, be specific." The Select Board and the Finance Committee were kept fully informed and participated in approving the final proposals.

After an initial round of comparing the cash and benefits packages offered to similar employees in at least eight surrounding towns, the committee decided to

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deal with cash items for the 2008 budget and continue review of the benefits for the 2009 budget. We found Monterey to be in the middle to lower half compared to other towns in cash compensation, with our employees generally having more responsibilities assigned to them and less generous benefits.

The ECC, Select Board, and Finance Committee have approved and proposed new salaries and hourly rates for the 2008 budget. The salaries for the Director of Operations and Chief of Police, and the hourly rate for one other highway position have been increased by 10% as catch-up to better reflect their job descriptions and seniority, and competitive rates in our area. The other jobs received modest raises to also be more competitive. These new salaries and hourly rates are intended to be a basis for more regular review going forward.

Now, a word about how to better consider individual compensation at the town meeting. While I have developed a great fondness for the town meeting process, I have been appalled by the way employees were treated in that forum. In my view this is not the appropriate place to renegotiate the details of individual job descriptions and compensation. All the sensitive issues, negotiations, and personal give and take that establish compensation and management of employees are entirely different than deciding on capital expenditures. Hence, I was willing to try and bring some reality and order to an evaluation, negotiation and proposal process by participation in the ECC, and am willing to stick my neck out and fight for it.

The diligence with which data was collected, the forum that the committee provided for airing and reviewing past issues, the extensive explanatory material provided, and the unified support of the Select Board and the Finance Committee should all cause citizens to have high confidence in the equity and validity of the budget proposals. It is my view that if citizens have disagreements with these categories of the budget, those should be directed to the Select Board and Finance Committee outside the Town Meeting. By the time the line items for employee compensation arrive at Town Meeting, they should be voted up or down, but not renegotiated or picked apart. I believe that such attempts in that forum for employee compensation are destructive, inappropriate, and basically unfair.

Monterey is lucky to have such committed and qualified employees to make our town function well for us all. They deserve the dignity of regular reviews and competitive compensation in a process that can be counted on and respected. Residents should be able to have confidence that routine processes are established and followed within our budget and in a fair and equitable manner.

— Janet Cathcart

Board of Health Seeks Input

The Monterey Board of Health needs your input. We are currently reevaluating the public health services Monterey receives from our visiting nurse agency and we want to make sure we are meeting the needs of our residents, all ages. The Board of Health would like to know what public health services you would find most beneficial and during what time of the day. Please pick up a survey at the Town Hall, located at 435 Main Rd or print one from our website: www.monterey-ma.org and click on Town Government and Departments and then Board of Health.

Bidwell House Needs Garden Volunteers

Are you a home gardener, a seed saver, a person who would love to learn organic gardening or meet other people while working on a project? The Bidwell House Museum needs volunteers for the heirloom vegetable garden and the flower gardens and for giving tours this summer. We would love to have you join us; we'll work around your schedule or you can sign up for Saturday mornings at 9:00 am for garden work with others. Interested? Call 413-528-6888.

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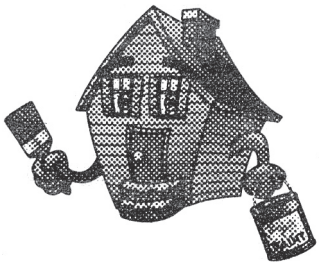

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Southern Berkshire Regional School District
FY08 BUDGET FACT SHEET

The SBRSD proposed *budget* for the 2007-2008 school year is as follows:

General Operating (existing)	$ 10,990,888	4.73% Increase
School Choice Tuition (added)	350,000	100.00% Increase*
Transportation	887,237	19.53% Increase*
TOTAL OPERATING:	$ 12,228,125	8.82% Increase
Capital Expense	$ 2,142,945	(7.44% Decrease)
TOTAL BUDGET:	$ 14,371,070	6.04% Increase

* School choice tuition-out expense has been covered by a special revenue fund in the past. This fund has been depleted, and the estimated net loss between choice-in revenue and choice-out expense has had to be added to the budget. The district's 5-year transportation contract expires on 6-30-07. The 19.53% increase reflects the new contract prices, and was influenced by the dramatic increase in gas prices as well as other factors.

The *Total Operating budget increases* are made up as follows:

Salaries	$ 281,880	4.28% Increase
Personnel Insurances	231,710	10.81% Increase
Transportation	144,963	19.53% Increase*
School Choice Tuition	350,000	100.00% Increase*
All Other Areas	(17,433)	(.98% Decrease)
TOTAL INCREASE:	$ 991,120	8.82% Increase

The SBRSD School Committee voted to allocate the *Total Operating Assessments* to the 5-member towns based on the Regional Agreement as amended and approved by the five towns (officials and voters) in 2001. This agreement is in effect through FY2011. It bases assessments on a 10-year rolling average of student enrollment by town. Each town pays the same cost per "rolling-average" student using this method. This assessment method is called the "*Alternative Method*". *These assessment amounts have been certified to the Towns by the District Treasurer*:

Alford	$ 498,608	8.36% Increase	$ 9,635 per rolling average student
Egremont	1,187,506	9.53% Increase	$ 9,635 per rolling average student
Monterey	808,853	11.24% Increase	$ 9,635 per rolling average student
New Marlborough	1,724,654	10.15% Increase	$ 9,635 per rolling average student
Sheffield	5,081,949	9.60% Increase	$ 9,635 per rolling average student
	$ 9,301,570		

Another assessment method, called the "*Statutory Method*" *can be used if a School Committee chooses to do so.* (*However, this method conflicts with the SBRSD Regional Agreement method approved by town officials and voters in 2001).* Costs are allocated to the member towns using a different method. For FY08, the first $7,019,446 of the assessment would have been assessed based on a state calculation using a multitude of factors, including each town's total 2004 income, 2006 property equalized valuation, municipal revenue growth factor, and other factors. The remainder of the assessment would be based on the regional agreement. This method was clarified in the Department of Education's "Code of Municipal Regulations" on January 23, 2007. *The assessments using this formula would have been:*

Alford	$ 468,684	1.86% Increase	$ 9,057 per rolling average student
Egremont	1,305,283	20.40% Increase	$ 10,591 per rolling average student
Monterey	877,685	20.70% Increase	$ 10,455 per rolling average student
New Marlborough	1,892,845	20.89% Increase	$ 10,575 per rolling average student
Sheffield	4,757,074	2.59% Increase	$ 9,019 per rolling average student
	$ 9,301,570		

The Select Boards of the 5 member towns have discussed tentative plans to begin talks in the coming year to address the issue of the method of assessment to be used in future years.

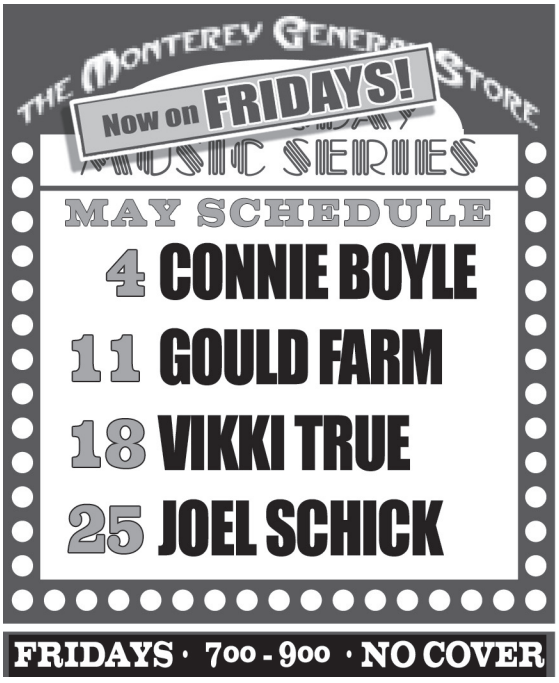
Library Notes

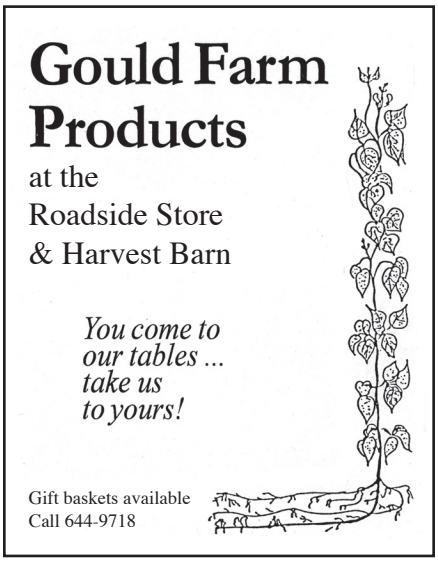
We recently acquired a DVD copy of *Town Meeting and You,* produced by the Massachusetts Moderators' Association. If you would like to learn more about the history and workings of a town meeting, this is a good way to start. We also have a new edition of the Moderator's Bible, *Town Meeting Time*, available for patrons.

May 5 will be the last youth book discussion group of the year. It will start early at the Monterey General Store with a pizza party, and families of the participants are welcome. This program is made possible by the Monterey Cultural Council, and the library is especially grateful to Franny Huberman for putting in so much effort to this program. It's a pleasure to see all those kids reading and discussing books.

Finally, we have a new addition to the cultural pass program. We already have passes for the Berkshire Musuem, the Clark Art Institute, Norman Rockwell Museum, the Bidwell House, Mass MOCA, Hancock Shaker Village, and a Parks Pass good for the parking fee at all Massachusetts state forests and parks (including ones with beaches!). We just received a pass to The Mount in Lenox. Each pass can be taken out like a book and used to gain admission to these sites. The number of people allowed for each vary, so check with the librarian on duty to find out how each one works. The passes, which are available throughout the year, are popular and are circulated on a first come first served basis.

— Mark Makuc, Library Director





the first bees of spring

sweeping and mopping
just some of the dust
from a serene corner
of our one wild mind
returning sun warming
buds of apricot
opening one by one
as we sit here hummmm
ing
the first bees of spring

— Boney Oscar

The Surprise

You planted
crocuses to spell I love you
one fall afternoon
while I was busy baking —
the moles were deeply touched
all winter under the snows!
come spring
the crocuses couldn't spell at all
but I got the message from
purple, white, and yellow shouts
of glory random in the green
we laughed
looking out the kitchen window
and talked of putting in the screens soon
for summer
but really we were thinking —
another spring,
still together.

— A. O. Howell

In memoriam

For Walter

After you died
I dreamt of two stone harps
on a lonely beach —
no strings!

— A. O. Howell

Blue Grace

in Memory of David Park McAllester:
August 6, 1916–April 30, 2006

Blue for the morning lake,
still humming from
the night. Blue for the heron,
a ballerina of the reed.
Blue for this curl of smoke,
in a tipi on the shore.

Blue for grace,
the color from your eyes,

Blue reflecting
everywhere.
Moving like music,
or gentle hands —

Blue in the heron's
wing, pirouetting
on the lake,
floating up,
up Blue across the sky,
or flying down,
down Blue over
your tipi —
sunlit,
on the shore.

— Melissa Hamilton, April 2007

(This poem was inspired from a 5 a.m. canoe excursion I took with David in his late eighties. I was in my mid-twenties, still half asleep, and he was wide awake, wearing a blue flannel shirt, carrying the paddles and canoe without effort. As we paddled across the mist of Lake Garfield, he pointed out a heron stalking in the reeds, geese flying above, water bugs, and floating lily pads. There is so much to say about David, the life he lived, and the peace he embodied. He held great enthusiasm for the natural world and delighted in the details of his own backyard in Monterey. Knowing David deeply influenced my life, reminding me to walk gently and to look for the songs under every rock. As I tried to create a poem, the color blue kept coming to mind—for his eyes that sparked with life. I recalled a note I received from him in January 2006, where he said, "... As I write, some small icicles are melting outside my window. Each one contains an image of the sun in rainbow colors. We inhabit a glorious cosmos!")

Public Hearing on Tyringham Road Property

On Thursday, April 19, a public hearing was held at Town Hall to discuss the town's right of first refusal on property currently owned by Barclay Hudson. The 70+ acre property on the east side of Tyringham Road north of Mt. Hunger Road is thought to have been in "Chapter 61B," land set aside for recreational use by the public. Because land so held receives a municipal tax break, the town is allowed to buy it should there be a valid sales contract that would take the land out of Chapter 61B.

Select Board member Jon Sylbert recused himself from the meeting's leadership because of a conflict of interest due to his presidency of the Monterey Preservation Land Trust, which may have an interest in securing the Hudson property.

At the outset of the public hearing, Barclay Hudson's lawyer announced that there is evidence that the property has not been in 61B for some years. According to Hudson, he applied for 61B in 1992, but did not file annually, as he believed was necessary to maintain the tax relief. The land was designated 61B in 1992 and taxed accordingly until the late 1990s, when it appeared on the tax rolls at full value. In 2002, the property was once again designated as 61B, and received the appropriate tax break.

Hudson and his attorney hope to straighten out this question with Monterey Town Counsel in the very near future. If the property is and has been designated legally and appropriately as 61B, then Monterey has a right to exercise its option to buy the property at the value in the legal contract, or to assign its right to buy to another entity, such as a land trust, or to allow Hudson to complete the sale to the potential buyers. If there is a legal decision that the town does not have a right to buy the property because, through one mistake or another, the 61B provision was mishandled by the town, then Hudson can sell the property without further consultation.

State law requires that in the case of Chapter 61 land sales, the town is given 120 days from the date it was notified of a pending sale to make its decision about "right to buy." Hudson notified the town on or around March 14, 2007, so an understanding of the situation must be resolved by mid-July.

— Laurily Epstein

Free Boating Safety Course

Last summer, after a disastrous boating accident *almost* happened—thank heavens it was only almost—the Friends of Lake Garfield formed a boating safety committee. Headed by Steve Aronson, the committee completed and distributed a list of safe boating rules within a week. (Check them out at LakeGarfield.org.)

The boating safety rules were a small step—and now here's a giant step you can take. Take advantage of a FREE boating safety course that FLG has arranged on Saturday, May 26, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Monterey Fire Station. You'll receive a certification that you have completed the course. Who knows? It might even lower your boating insurance.

Advance registration is suggested but not required. For information or to register, email Steve Matthews, matthews147@juno.com.

Martha Dailey to Speak at May 9th Community Dinner

Many thanks to Ellen Pearson for her fascinating presentation of her Earthwatch trip to northern China at the April potluck dinner. She brought us a real feel for the people, the way they live, and the problems they are facing in trying to maintain their culture in a new environment.

There was a lively discussion at the April potluck regarding extending the dinners to year-round. Several votes were taken to determine the feelings of those present. There was mention of how busy everyone is in the summer versus the desire to include second-home owners. Consensus was reached that for this year we will extend into June and begin again in September. Volunteers were solicited for the committee to help with decorations, planning speakers, etc., and none were found; anyone wishing to help please call Kyle Pierce at 528-9213 or Barbara Dahlman at 528-8287.

At the May 9th Monterey community potluck dinner, Martha Dailey, the executive director of the Bidwell House Museum, will present an interactive lecture entitled "How in the World Did They Do It? Colonial Life Ways: A Case Study of the Life and Home of Adonijah Bidwell."

The dinner will be held at the Meetinghouse at 6 p.m. All are welcome. Please bring a dish to share with a serving utensil and a plate and silverware for yourself.

— Kyle Pierce

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Planning Board News

The Planning Board suffered a setback when members learned at the eleventh hour that the warrant item to set standards for common driveways will have to be passed over at the annual town meeting. After the bylaw proposal was already printed on the warrant the board was informed by Town Counsel that instead of referring to obtaining a "permit" for common driveways, the wording should read "special permit." A permit is issued for a use-by-right and and that means a common driveway permit would be a special permit. This seemingly minor change produces a ripple effect. In the Monterey Zoning Bylaws special permits are granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals. The common driveway special permit would be obtained from the Planning Board, which means adding language to Section IX. Powers, Duties and Procedures, that would allow the Planning Board to grant a special permit for a common driveway. Additionally, the Planning Board must add language to the proposal that includes Section IV. B. Agricultural-Residential District, 2. Uses By Special Permit. In order to make those changes there must be a public hearing with a minimum of fourteen days' notice. It's a bit of a bummer but we're not giving up.

The other warrant item from the Planning Board, Article 27, still stands. It is a proposal to change the language in Section VII.C Non-municipal Educational or Religious Use. The current language stipulates that all non-municipal education or religious uses/structures must have a 200-foot buffer surrounding the property. In the case of Gould Farm this means that either they have to site new buildings 200 feet back from the road or obtain a variance. The new language would exclude the buffer zone when both sides of the road are owned by the same institution.

At the April 26th meeting of the Planning Board, Joanne Brett Simms, Ronald Simms, and their attorney Anthony Doyle presented a Form A for four lots on what has variously been referred to as Old Beartown Road and/or Bear Mountain Road. The status of this road has been in litigation for almost ten years. An abutter to the property, Maureen Haugh, was under the impression that her property was abutted by Beartown State Forest. She was surprised to find any kind of development planned for the adjacent lots. It has taken the past ten years of court cases(!) to unravel a complicated tangle. The road used to be the traveled way from Monterey to South Lee, but was discontinued in 1906 with the property reverting to the owners of the land the road passed over. In the 1940s when Beartown State Forest was created, the Commonweath of Massachusetts purchased the land around the Simms property (which at that time belonged to Rufus Brett). At that time Rufus Brett also conveyed a strip of land to the commonwealth that was essentially the old road that went through his property. The state forest used the road for a while as access to Benedict Pond. In 1961 when Rufus Brett left the property to William Brett, he stipulated in the deed that "The grantor shall have access at all times from his property to and over the new road passing through said strip." The result of the Land Court decision is that the Simmses have the right to access their building lots and install utilities to those lots. The Land Court decision also said that the legal status of the road, now owned by the commonwealth, is a private way.

— Maggie Leonard
Chair, Monterey Planning Board

Memorial Day Schedule

11:00 a.m.: There will be a solemn ceremony at the Monterey Veterans Memorial Park at the corner of Blue Hill Rd. and Main Road, rain or shine. This year's ceremony will be a little different as there will be several local younger military people speaking as our honored guests. We urge all veterans to join together. Everyone is invited.

1:00 p.m.: The PARADE starts at Sandisfield Road, and then marches to the center of Monterey where there will be ceremonies of remembrance. The parade will then proceed to the Firehouse for refreshments and joy for all.

Don't forget what Memorial Day means!

— Dean Amidon

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Berkshire Fish Hatchery Hosts Annual Open House

On Saturday, April 21, as visitors began to assemble up the steep Hatchery Road, a glorious sunny spring day was waiting to help them celebrate Earth Day with an open house for the fifth consecutive year. This year the up-and-coming Berkshire Hatchery Foundation scheduled a two-day event, carrying over into Sunday, April 22, and more than 150 guests took advantage of the good weather to appreciate the educational displays and activities in a program tailored for family involvement.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Biologist Henry Bouchard was on hand both days to educate and inform on the Hatchery's involvement in the Connecticut River Salmon Restoration Program, including diagrams showing how to tell the age and health of an Atlantic salmon by examining just one of its scales under a microscope. Nearby were spectacular woodcarvings of a male and female trout spawning roe in a streambed by George Varek of Westfield.

Outdoors under two new tents donated for the occasion by Monterey Coffee Club members Rod Palmer and Steve Kahn, Massachusetts State Wildlife technician Tammy Ciesla set up a booth, as did Environmental Officer Melissa Hamm with her husband, Gordon, manager of Beartown Mountain State Park. Also giving out material on almost every matter of local interest was Kristina Moretz, president of the Berkshire chapter of The Izaak Walton League.

Fly rod casting lessons for all ages were offered by Bart Miller of Lee and Marty Cherneff of Monterey, a member of the Hatchery Board of Directors. Larry Niemark of Pittsfield offered lessons in fly tying, art form, like fly rod casting, with connections to the growing popularity of conservation through catch and release. Many Hatchery supporters are dyed-in-the-wool fishermen and -women.

Children were allowed to feed trophy fish in the middle pond and were thrilled to be splashed by four- and six-pounders rising to the bait, while their parents marveled at the pristine clarity of water as clear as that in the bottles of drinking water they held. Hatchery water, like that of the Berkshire Mountain Water Co. not far away, comes from an aquifer perhaps a mile below the surface, about 45 degrees every day of the year, and subsequently disease free and perfect for a cold-water fishery.

Robert Rausch of Gould Farm was on hand for guided walking tours of the Hatchery trails, as well as a climb up to the rim of a nearby kettle, a geological indentation of several hundred feet left behind by melting ice from the last glacier. Perhaps this was a meaningful moment on Earth Day—to stand at the top and look down, to ponder the historic cycle of global warming that passed through here.

Kyp Wasiuk did the cooking of hot dogs and hamburgers, so the no one went home hungry. Kyp was first brought here as a child by her father, who was gun editor of *Field and Stream*. Hopefully families who attended the open house will not forget us.

— George Emmons

Cal Ripken Youth Baseball Sign-Ups Underway

Cal Ripken South Berkshire County youth baseball league sign-ups for all players ages 5–12 will continue through May. The South County league covers Great Barrington, Monterey, Otis, Becket, Sandisfield, and surrounding communities.

All boys and girls, with or without experience are welcome. There are no tryouts. Players can register by mailing $35 per player or $50 maximum per family to Jim Edelman, President, South Berkshire Cal Ripken League, PO Box 11, Monterey, MA 01245.

The local 15 to 20 game season runs late April through June. Optional post-season tournament and summer season events are also planned. Parental involvement is invited. The Cal Ripken baseball experience emphasizes fun, friendship, hitting, action, and team spirit. Everybody plays in games and learns at their own pace.

Home games and practices take place at Greene Park on Route 23 in Monterey center. Activities are scheduled two to three times per week for ages 8 and above. Younger players learn with tennis balls at one event per week. There is no mandatory attendance for practices or games, but participants should hope to attend at least 50% of the time.

For more information, contact Jim Edelman, President, at 413-528-0006 or email cljvedelman@aol.com.

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Paint/Oil collections for South Berkshire Towns

CET will coordinate three separate collections of oil paint, stains, paint thinners, and turpentine, as well as waste motor oil in Lenox and Great Barrington for South Berkshire Towns. Pre-registration with CET is suggested.

This program is sponsored by the fifteen towns that form the South Berkshire Household Hazardous Waste Collaborative. The participating towns are Alford, Becket, Egremont, Great Barrington, Lee, Lenox, Monterey, Mount Washington, New Marlborough, Otis, Richmond, Sheffield, Stockbridge, Tyringham, and West Stockbridge.

- **Wednesday, May 16, 4 to 6:30 p.m.,** Great Barrington Recycling Center, Route 7 (across from Monument Mountain High School).
- **Saturday, June 16, 9 to 11:00 a.m.,** Lenox Department of Public Works, 275 Main Street (across from Mass Highway).

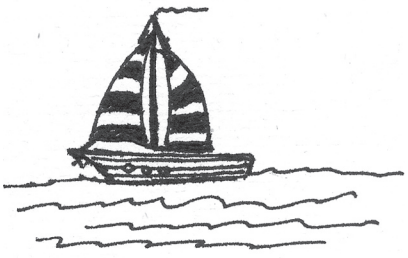
Latex paint will not be accepted at any events. Usable paint can be given away through freecycle.org or some nonprofits. Empty or dried up cans of latex paint can be put in the regular trash. Empty cans of oil-based paint, stains and solvents can be disposed with the regular trash as well.

To pre-register or for information about what can be brought to the collection, visit www.cetonline.org or email cynthiag@cetonline.org. Residents from communities that are not participating should call their city or town hall for information about household hazardous product collections.

Free 4th Friday Film Series

On Friday, May 25, at 7:00 p.m. at the Friends Meetinghouse (Quakers), 280 State Rd., Great Barrington, the Free Friday Film series will show *Why We Fight,* a 98-minute documentary in English and Arabic, directed by Eugene Jarecki.

Throughout this film we are haunted by Dwight D. Eisenhower's warning about the rise of the "military industrial complex" and the danger we Americans pose to ourselves and the whole world when war becomes big business. We also follow the stories of some ordinary people: a retired NYC policeman whose son died in one of the Twin Towers, a young man enlisting straight out of school. The film won the Sundance Grand Jury Award. Discussion will follow. For information, call Bonner McAllester, 413- 528-9385.



Impeachment Forum May 6

"Endless War or Impeachment," a forum on the issue of impeachment, will be held at 3 p.m., Sunday, May 6, 2007, at Berkshire Community College, Room K-111. Attendance is free and open to all. Time will be given to attendees to ask questions and offer comments.

Voters in the Berkshire County towns Cheshire, Great Barrington, Lanesboro, Lee, and Stockbridge will vote on resolutions for impeachment of President George W. Bush and Vice President Richard E. Cheney at their May 2007 annual town meetings. The cities of Amherst, Brookline, Wendell, and Northampton have already approved impeachment resolutions. Charlemont, Heath, Buckland, Whately, Ashfield, Montague, Shutesbury, and Gill will also vote on an impeachment resolution at their town meetings.

The forum will begin at 3 p.m. with Tim Carpenter, Founder and Director of Progressive Democrats of America, followed by video presentations by John Nichols, historian ad author of *The Genius of Impeachment,* and John Bonifaz, constitutional lawyer, cofounder of Afterdowningstreet.org, and author of *The Warrior King*. Dan Dewalt, Selectman of Newfane, Vermont and organizer of successful impeachment initiatives in forty towns in Vermont, will speak afterward.

For further information phone Russell Freedman, 413-447-8010, or email impeachforum@hotmail.com.

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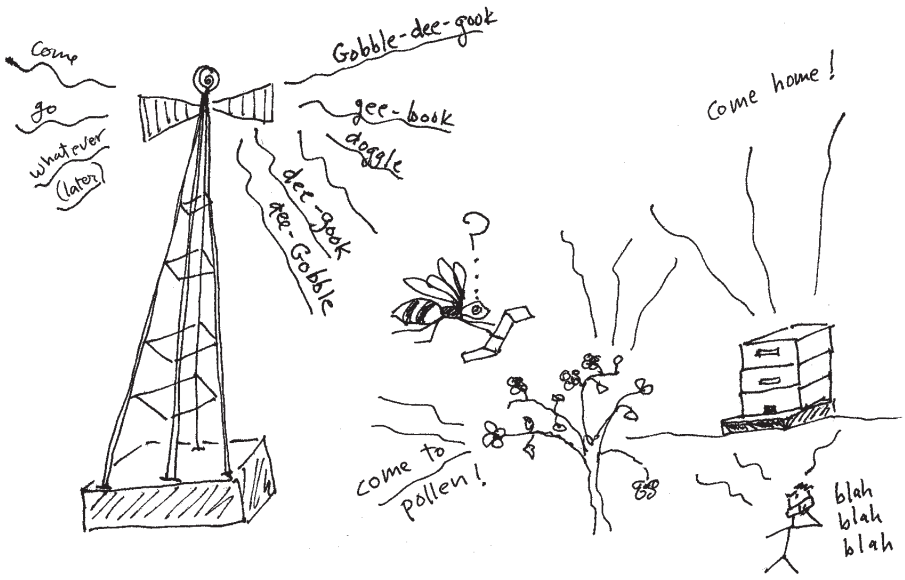
Me and the Bees, and Thee

Latest eco-scare: honeybee decline caused by cell phone emissions. This was all over the eco-news a week or so ago, and by now the backlash is on. Shoddy research, other variables, bees in trouble anyway for years. Does this sound familiar? Makes me think of the young man who visited us a couple of years ago, halfway through his US Army Special Forces training. He figured Saddam Hussein *had* the WMDs. It was obvious. I mean why go to all the bother of hiding them and getting them out of the country if you were not guilty as charged? So the very fact that the UN weapons inspectors had found nothing was proof that there was something. I'm telling you, it is hard to keep up sometimes. I saw this Walt Disney film when I was a kid. I think it was called *Darby O'Gill and The Little People*. Charismatic old Irishman takes the smart and doubting kids to see the leprechauns. It's nighttime, a little spooky, maybe a graveyard or a drippy woods.

The old guy says, "Shhhhh. Listen … they're here!" The smart kids go, "But I don't hear anything!" He says, "Yes, that's it exactly. That's them keeping still!"

As for the bees and the cell phones, I am hearing them keeping still. That is, the bees are keeping still. Cell phones, now, that is another matter. Does anyone remember when they hit town? (I don't mean Monterey, of course.) What was the exact day that you went to a family reunion and everyone got out of their cars and instead of greeting each other they clapped their phones to their ears and strode around contacting people on the other side of the state or continent? When was that day you were waiting to use the john at Mass MOCA or the turnpike travel plaza and the door of the booth opened and a friendly person walked out saying loudly, "Hi!..." and you foolishly grinned and replied, only to realize she was on the phone with someone not you, someone not two feet away in the same small room. Or maybe not even the same time zone.



What we are hearing about the bees is that 50% of them (or 80%, pick your number) are no longer finding their way home to the hive. For months and years we didn't know why, but suddenly research is in from a (shoddy, some say) British team that suggests bees in the presence of cell phone emissions can't get home. Does anyone remember the whales and their echolocation systems jammed by the Navy's sonar experiments? Whales dying, surfacing too fast, blowing out their delicate decompression arrangements because their brains were scrambled by military sonar exercises?

So we heard this warning about the bees, heard Albert Einstein's statement (who the heck was he? some obscure bee expert?) that without the pollinators humankind could last four years on stored food and a few wind-pollinated crops. And right away the reassurance comes that it's not really cell phones, oh no. Cell phones are good and can save your life if you foolishly fly

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your small plane despite bad weather. Or if you run out of gas somewhere despite your functioning gas gauge. Or if you can't find anything on the radio while waiting at that red light or driving that boring highway. Or if you are actually by yourself somewhere for a few minutes and can't stand the silence (or the company).

Please, don't even hint that my cell phone is a problem, could cause food shortages all over the world. I am in way too deep with my cell phone. I don't know the last names of my friends and business connections or where they live. I have never written down their addresses or phone numbers. I have them all stored on my phone, along with everything else. I have to choose between a bee and my phone? Be serious. Bees sting, they are not all good. I never see bees, anyway.

You can get all these arguments and more by hitting Google. You can spend the rest of your life reading the over a million entries to be found there. I just did go there, and I was amazed at people's logic (and spelling). Made me think right away of the US Army brainwashing job and Walt Disney.

Still, I was excited for a minute to think that the coming together of Einstein and bees might rid us of cell phones. Scientists, like Einstein and like me and thee, know better that to put faith in the "single factor hypothesis." In other words, there's no way it's just the cell phones. No single culprit and no quick fix. Here's my suggestion: let's get rid of the cell phones because they are bad for our real-place social lives and lead us to have no idea where our friends live. At the same time, let's find out what is really up with the bees. We may have just four years for this, if you can believe Einstein.

— Bonner J. McAllester

Cultural Council Events

May 25–28: Photography Contest

The prospectus for the Memorial Day Weekend Photography Contest and Exhibition is now available at Town Hall, the General Store, the Library, or online at www.monterey-ma.org. Please refer to it for details concerning this juried show of pictures taken in Monterey. For questions call Kathryn Roberts at 644-9868 or email Joe Baker at joe@bakerworks.com. Here is a brief calendar of the event:

May 20 and 21: Photo entries with entry forms can be dropped off from 4:00-6:00 p.m. on Sunday or 5:00–7:00 p.m. on Monday in the lower level of the Monterey Meetinghouse. All entries must be framed or matted so they are ready to be hung for display in this location.

May 25: Photo Contest Reception at the Meetinghouse from 5:00–7:00 p.m., with awards ceremony at 6:00.

May 26: Photo Show at the Meetinghouse from 9:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

May 27: Photo Show at the Meetinghouse from 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

May 28: Photo Show at the Meetinghouse from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. **Pick up all photo entries between 2:00 and 3:00 p.m.**

Saturday, June 8, 8:00 pm: Astronomy Night (Cloud date: Sunday, June 9)

Back by popular demand, Richard Sanderson, Curator of Physical Science and Planetarium Director at the Springfield Science Museum, and Dave Galiup, President of the Springfield Naturalists Club and longtime astronomy educator, will take us on a tour of the night sky. The group will meet approximately one hour indoors in the Monterey Meetinghouse community room for explanation of astronomy principles and discussion of what to look for, and then proceed outside for sky viewing. Several telescopes will be available, and those attending are invited to bring their own binoculars and telescopes.

Saturday, June 16, 8:00 p.m.: Trillium in Concert

Don't miss this trio of fine Berkshire musicians. Watch for program details in next month's *News*.

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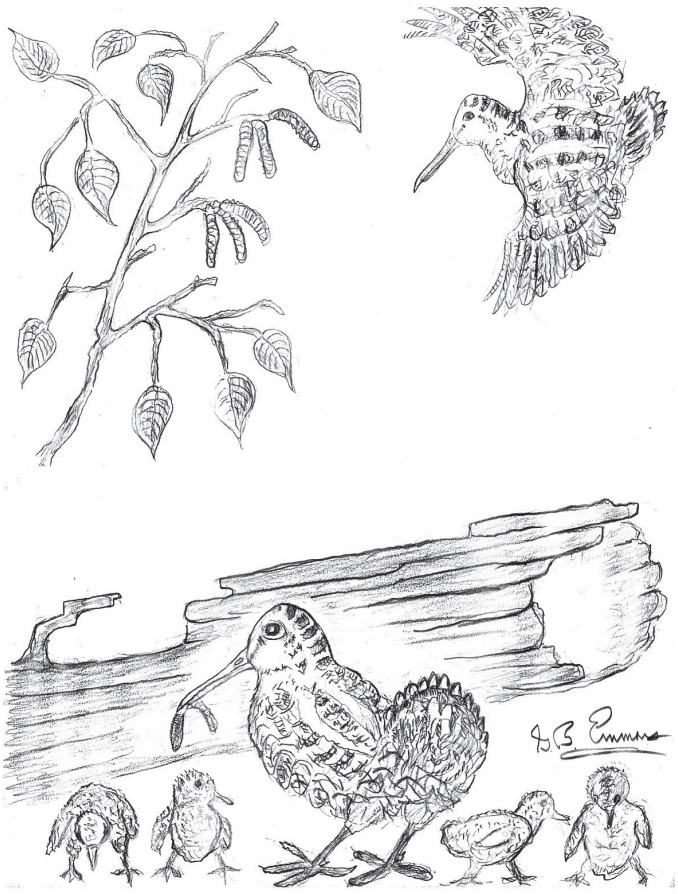
Woodcock on Earth Day

The local American woodcock is a native ground-nesting bird of note which also is naturally migratory. Like the swallows of Capistrano, woodcocks arrive here almost like clockwork in early March before the vernal equinox, having made a long journey from the far South. Their staple diet, appropriately relevant to the title of this article, is mainly earthworms.

In the month of May, prior to nesting (four eggs as a rule) the males of the species perform spectacular upward spiral flights at dawn or dusk, several hundred feet into the air to attract a receptive female into a particular territory. These aerobatic mating dances are performed in courtship areas known as "singing fields." In Monterey they may be seen along the meadows of Lowland Farm and Rawson Brook Farm, as well as near Diane's Trail. The show usually lasts about half an hour.

The subsequent nest is usually well camouflaged, with the spotted brown eggs, and the hen herself, blending in with the ground and almost impossible to discover with the human eye. However if she feels her nest has been found, she will move her eggs to another nearby location by grasping each one separately between her legs while flapping her wings along the ground for the short distance required.

There are also isolated sightings of a mother moving each one of her four chicks for a similar reason, although these sightings are so rare that they are contested by experienced bird-watchers. Another challenged observation of a woodcock in flight is the source of the whistling noise that sounds as if it is made with the wings. The woodcock also makes a similar noise with its vocal cords when excited. Regardless of your own opinions about this behavior, the woodcock (classified as *Philohela minor*) is unique, or you might even say a strange bird, indeed.



Their departure for the migratory flight southward in autumn is usually not well defined; sometimes they are seen in flocks passing through anytime in October or November. The flights usually begins at dusk when there is a favorable wind in the direction of their journey. This time of day was called "cockshut time" in Olde England—when their woodcock, slightly larger than ours, was seen just before the sun went down, it was time to close the wooden shutters against the coming damp night air.

Sometime before Thanksgiving, when the earth is frosted and ready to freeze, making it impossible to probe for worms, our streamside alder and birch coverts will be empty of woodcock; they will have left the night before, using waterways reflected under a full moon as a navigational aid for guidance. However, this is also often disputed, just another reason for this bird extraordinary reputation. Perhaps its mystique comes from living in close proximity to the earth.

— George Emmons

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The GeoBee: Experiencing an Academic Competition

"Yukon." "Yukon." "Manitoba." "Saskatchewan." "Saskatchewan." "Saskatchewan." "Saskatchewan." "Saskatchewan." "Saskatchewan." "Saskatchewan." The ten contestants solemnly read their answers, each holding up with sweaty hands a board displaying their guess in block letters before a silent crowd of 300 people. "I'm sorry," the moderator replied without emotion to the group of hopefuls, any one of which could end up with the coveted honor: the geography championship of Massachusetts and a ticket to the National Geographic Bee final round in Washington. "The answer is Alberta." She glanced at the scoreboard. "Would the following students please rejoin their families…?" As my name was read, I walked off the stage and trudged back to my seat to observe the remaining five in their quest. I sighed deeply. It was over.

While writing the earlier article for the January issue of the *Monterey News,* I believed, like one hundred thousand other children in grades four through eight that my hunt for the National Championship would end that night in the second tier of the competition: the school level. Pure elation was the only way to describe how I felt as I made the school level final round for my homeschooling group.

As a seventh grader, my wait had lasted four years. I have always loved geography, but I first heard of the competition while homeschooling third grade. Part of my decision to move to school for fourth grade (my first eligible year) lay in a false claim of a school official that the district hosted the Bee. I remained in school until the end of fifth grade. When we organized no Bee for my sixth grade year, time began to run out. At the beginning of seventh grade, it appeared I would never experience the Bee. Thankfully, as the year progressed, the dream materialized.

Five minutes after the finals began, it became clear that I would represent The Berkshire Adventure Learners in the next round, the Qualifying Test. The one hundred top Qualifying Test scorers in each state go to the State Bee. The Qualifying Test is multiple-choice, yet even so it manages to be a very difficult exam, with questions in every possible field of geography. Test-takers are allowed a one-hour period to complete it. One agonizing month later, the results came in. I was going to Worcester for the State Bee to represent Berkshire County along with Andrew Varuzzo of North Adams.

At that point, studying reached a high level. For a whole week beforehand, a lot of time was spent with factual review. Then, on Friday, the 30th of March, the time of the State Bee arrived. In the minutes before the preliminary rounds began, I flipped through a program listing the other contestants, 102 in number (there were some Qualifying Test ties). All were students in various schools. I would have to represent singlehandedly the homeschoolers of Massachusetts. As the preliminaries began, contestants and their supporters filed into various buildings nearby with their color-coded groups.

During the lengthy preliminaries, the atmosphere was so tense that contestants could not speak to others or one another in the two-minute break provided. After a short rule review and casual practice round, the contest of eight rounds began. I was flustered, clueless, and daunted at times, but as round eight, Flora and Fauna, ended the score sheet showed three 8-of-8 finishers. The names read Christopher Hart, Jonah Carlson, and Christopher Uminski. Happily walking back to the main stage, I pondered a possible final round appearance. When the results came in, I discovered that nine people including myself had correctly answered all eight questions. The winner of the tiebreaker joined us to round out the field of ten.

Just before the finals began, all ten assembled on the stage. The air was so quiet I could hear the person sitting beside me breathing anxiously. Then the moderator reread the rules and then the first of an extensive set of questions that would decide who went to Washington.

The first round consisted of National Parks of the United States. As everyone else got questions I knew, I felt hope surge through me. Then she read my question. I froze, unprepared. I did not know what state was home to Grand Cypress National Park! All the previous questions had had ample clues. Mine had none. I searched my mind wildly for an answer. "Mississippi?" "The answer is Florida," came my reply.

Two rounds later, my pursuit of the National Title would be over. Christopher Hart would defeat Christopher Uminski two questions to one in the Championship Round. One week later, I would discover a bitter truth. On a post-Bee trip to Florida originally planned for February, I heard several locals referring in conversation to Grand Cypress National Park. I winced. Had the trip gone as planned, who knows what would have happened. I have no doubt I will remember the Bee and the Grand Cypress question for the remainder of my life, but now, I must put it aside and begin the wait for next year.

— Jonah Carlson

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Cell Tower Location?

To the Editor:

We the Curtin bros. would like to suggest to Monterey that we have the ideal spot for a cell tower on our land off the Royal Hemlock Road. We had a test done and were told our area would cover Monterey. This area is very remote and would not be seen from most of Monterey. We are ready to talk.

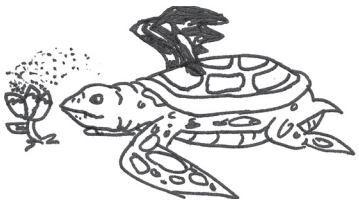
— Curtin Brothers, Tyringham

Thanks, Neighbors

To the Editor:

Thanks to all the helpful Monterey folks I have found my phone which was lost after the candidates' night meeting at the Monterey Meetinghouse on Wednesday, 4/25/07. Your help is so very much appreciated.

— Carol Ingher



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We thank the following folks for their recent contributions in response to our annual funding appeal. Your support makes it possible for us to continue publishing. We know you receive requests from many worthy organizations for financial help and are grateful that you include the *Monterey News* in your giving.

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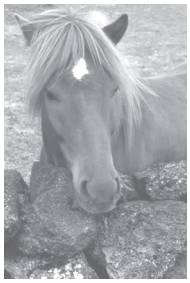

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Calendar

Every Monday (exc. holidays): Select Board mtg., 8:30 a.m., Town Offices.

Tuesday, May 1: Deadline for McLaughlin-Wilson Scholarship applications.

Wednesday, May 2: Full moon. Keep your cat inside.

Saturday, May 5: Annual town meeting and town election, Monterey Firehouse.

Tuesday, May 8 (and every second Tuesday): Monterey Blue Grass Jam, 6–8:30 p.m., Meetinghouse basement. Open to all skill levels; for information call Jeff Litishin, 413-528-1343.

Wednesday, May 9: Community Potluck Dinner, 6 p.m., Meetinghouse basement. Martha Dailey will speak on colonial life-ways at the Bidwell House. See p. 14.

Thursday, May 10: Free blood pressure clinic, 2–3 p.m., Town Offices, administered by Visiting Nurses Assoc.

Tuesday, May 15: Free health screening and insurance enrollment, Community Health program, 10 a.m.–noon, Town Hall Meeting Room. Call 413-644-0104 ext. 16 for more information.

Sunday, May 20, and Monday, May 21: Entries due for Cultural Council Monterey Photo Contest. See p.19.

Friday, May 25:

Cultural Council Photo Contest and Show opening reception, 7 pm., Meetinghouse, basement. Show continues through Monday, May 28. See p. 19.

Why We Fight, a 98-minute documentary in English and Arabic, 7:00 p.m., Friends Meetinghouse, 280 State Rd., Great Barrington. Free, information 413-528-9385. See p. 17.

Saturday, May 26:

Safe Boating Class, 9 a.m.–3 p.m., Monterey Fire Station. Free, sponsored by Friends of Lake Garfield. For information email.matthews147@juno.com.

Square and contra dancing, 8:30–11:30 p.m., Sheffield Grange, Rt. 7, Sheffield. Music by Mountain Laurel. Caller Jim Gregory. All dances are taught; beginners and children are welcome. Adults $6, children $3. Information 528-9385.

Dylan Thomas's *Milkwood, A Play for Voices,* 8 p.m., Sandisfield Arts Center, $10. Information 413-258-4100.

Monday, May 28: Memorial Day, Town Offices closed.

11:00 a.m.: Memorial Day Ceremony at Veterans Memorial Park, corner of Rt. 23 and Blue Hill Road. See p. 15.

1:00 p.m.: Memorial Day Parade through center of town to firehouse where refreshments will await.

Thursday, May 31: Full moon (we get two this month)

Saturday, June 8: Astronomy night, 8 p.m. Meetinghouse. Sponsored by Monterey Cultural Council. See p. 19.

The Observer
March 26–April 25

High temp. (4/23)	82°
Low temp. (4/7)	15°
Avg. high temp.	48.4°
Avg. low temp.	28.1°
Avg. temp.	38.3°
Total precipitation (rain and melted snow)	6.47 in.
Snowfall	5.3 in.
Precipitation occurred on 17 days.	
Season snowfall total	71.3 in.

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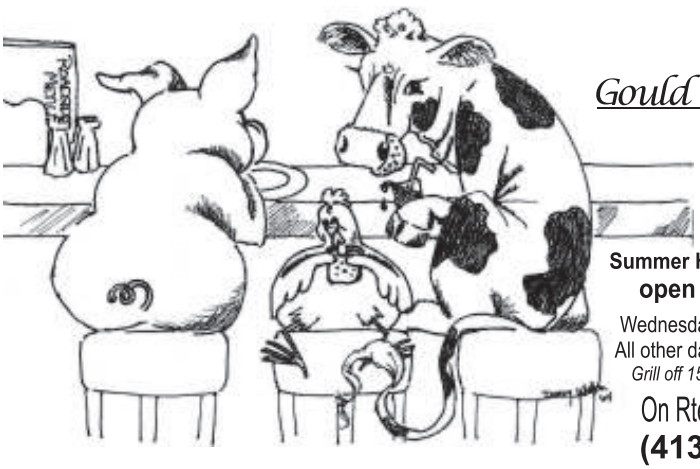

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Our editorial address is *Monterey News*, P. O. Box 9, Monterey, MA, 01245. We invite signed letters, articles, drawings, poetry, and photographs from readers. Please send submissions (e-mail or computer disk if possible) by the 20th of the month before publication, addressed to the Editor. Send any change of address, or initial request to receive the *News* by mail (free) to same address. We will set up an ad for your Monterey-based business or event, or advertisers may submit a computer formatted ad (pdf, tif, or jpeg format—Word files not acceptable) with graphics. Address requests for advertising rates and further information to the Editor, or telephone us at 413-528-4347 or e-mail montnews@localnet.com.

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Contributions from local artists this month:
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